

A
S E R M O N

Concerning the

W I S D O M of G O D

I N T H E

^{694.d}
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Works of Nature,

Preach'd before the Incorporate Society of

A P O T H E C A R I E S.

I N T H E

Parish Church of St. *ANDREW*
WARDROBE. London,
September 13th. 1705.

By *WILLIAM REEVES*, M. A. Rector
of *Craneford* in *Middlesex*.

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SEYMOUR

Concerning the

WISDOM OF GOD

WORKS OF NATURE

APOTHECARIES



Printed by J. JOHNSON, St. Paul's Church-Yard, London.

By WILLIAM KENNEDY, M.A. Secy.

Printed in the Royal College of Physicians.

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To the Worshipful the Master
and Wardens, the Court of
Assistants, and the rest of
the Ingenious and Useful
Society of Apothecaries.

GENTLEMEN,

IN Obedience to your Commands, *This Sermon comes into the World; the Subject I am sure is Vast and Noble, and worth Cultivating, in an Age, where so many little Wretches are pointing their Wit against their Maker, and picking Holes in his Creation and Providence, and striking God out of his World; while a Man of ordinary Depth and Geometry, finds it impossible, that the World should be Created by the same Laws it is preserv'd, or that it should be preserv'd a Moment without a Power Superior to Mechanism. I am very sensible, I have*
not

not Treated this Subject according to its Dignity,
and that it is not to be done in the Compass of a
Discourse upon this Occasion, and I would ask
the Reader's Candour in the Perusal, only I
could never find a Reader the more Candid for
asking; but if I have contributed any thing to
the Service of Religion, to make Men more
mindful of their Maker, while they are search-
ing into his Works, I shall think my Pains ve-
ry well bestow'd in Preaching and Printing the
following Discourse, at the Command of Those
I stand so nearly Related to. I am with all Re-
spect and Duty

Your Oblig'd

and Humble Servant,

William Reeves.

A Ser-

SERMON

Preach'd before the

APOTHECARIES.

Rom. i. 19.

—For God hath shewed it to them.

THE Scope of the Apostle in this Chapter, is, to prove the whole World under the just Condemnation of God, in order to illustrate the Necessity of Justification by Christ. To make good this Charge, He begins with the *Gentile*, and declares the *Wrath of God to be revealed from Heaven against all Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men, who hold the Truth in Unrighteousness*, v. 18. And of such Imprisonment, or violent Suppression of the Truth, He argues them Guilty

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in the Verse following ; *Because that which may be known of God, is manifest in them..* The Gentiles might Apologize, that the *Jews* indeed were a Favourite-People, instructed and fed from Heaven, under the immediate Polity of God, the Tuition of Prophets, and an Exorbitant Course of Mercy and Judgment, for many Ages, and therefore justly accountable for this Expence of prodigious Information ; but for themselves, they had none of these Extraordinaries, no such gracious Showers of Food and Instruction, 'not one Express from above concerning the Divine Will, and therefore not taxable for doing as they did, under such a Power of uninterrupted Darknes. To this self-indulging Apology for Sin, the Apostle replys, that notwithstanding they had not such a Measure of Conviction, such a Profusion of Light, as the *Jews* had, yet a Competency they had, so much of God was knowable by them, as to render their Practice inexcusable.—*For God hath shewed it to them, not indeed by express Revelation, but by very legible Characters in Nature,—For the invisible Things of Him from the Creation are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his Eternal Power and God-head ; so that they are without Excuse.*

From the Text in this Light, I shall proceed upon these following Heads.

I. That

I. *That Almighty God has given glorious Manifestations of his God-head in the Works of Nature.*

And therefore,

II. *That these Works are to be studied, to glorify the Maker of them.* And,

III. *That this Study of Nature, or a sober Inquiry into the Works of God, is very instrumental to Religion.*

I. The first and express Proposition of the Text, is, *That Almighty God has given glorious Manifestations of his God-head in the Works of Nature, For God hath shewed it to them.*

Whoever will give himself the Pleasure to contemplate this beautiful System of Things, will find it impossible to commence Atheist from Contemplation ; for he will find such a Natural Enthusiasm, something within so convictive of a God, and every Thing without so much above the Powers of Mechanism, he will see the Image and Superscription, the Style and Finger of Almighty Wisdom upon every Creature, such infinite Comprehension in the Contrivance of the Whole, and the curious Adjustment of the Parts, such an amazing Niceness and Geometry in the Bulk and Distance of the Heavenly Bodies, and such a Super-

natural Gravitation of one upon another, that the *Fool* only who examines not the Demonstration, can say, *There is no God.*

But I consider the Persons I am speaking to, and therefore shall confine my self chiefly to such Manifestations of a Deity in the Works of Nature, as lie most in the way of your Profession. These I conceive most seasonable at this Time, and with all as moving Demonstrations as any in Nature.

And first, If you consider the Circulation of the Blood, you will find a God must come into the Consideration, because it is impossible to be solv'd without him. I shall take for granted, notwithstanding any Modern Attempts to the contrary, that there is a constant Expulsion of the Blood from the Heart into the Arteries, and as constant an Influx into it out of the Cava; the Heart moves the Blood, and the Blood the Heart; here then is a perpetual Motion, by which I understand a constant Return of the same Quantity of Motion upon the first Mover, which by the meer Laws of Mechanism, I say is impossible; for the Motion produc'd in a Body, must be in Proportion to the Force producing it, and the Body moving, being continually resisted by the Air it moves in, the Motion must be continually check'd and abated in every Point of the Circle, and consequently cannot return undiminish'd upon the first Mover, which is necessary to a perpetual Motion, but will spend it self by Degrees and be at rest. And

in the present Case, if you go a little farther, and consider the motive Force of the Heart, and the Obstructions the Blood must meet with in the Circulation, you will find your selves incompass'd with all the Pleasures of Admiration, and acknowledge the *Invisible Things* of God to be clearly seen by this very Instance, inexplicable without him. The motive Force of a Man's Heart is by *Borellus* computed equal to Three thousand Pounds, and the Obstructions to the Motion of the Blood, equivalent to One hundred thirty five thousand Pounds; so that the Heart is but as the Power of One, to the Resistance of Forty five, and yet with what equal Velocity it discharges Three hundred and fifty Pounds of Blood an Hour, in spite of all these Obstacles?

Now has not God shew'd himself to you here with a Witness? Shew'd Infinite Power and Wisdom in the Contrivance and Execution of this Work; for the Circulation of the Blood, or the perpetual Motion of this *Red Sea in Man*, is not less Wonderful in it self, than the standing still of *That in the Wilderness*. The Constancy of this Course is less Astonishing indeed than that Miracle; but duly consider'd, is not less Argumentative of a God; for you see more Wonders of Wisdom in this Deep, tho' Almighty Power in both, a perpetual Motion being, as I have already prov'd, inconsistent with meer Mechanism, 'tis a strange Impression upon Matter not naturally be-

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longing to it, but super-induc'd by that Almighty Hand, by which alone we can thus Live, and Move, and have our Being.

What a surprizing Scene of *Variegated Wisdom*, what Ravishing Instances of Foresight, what a World of Beauty, Order and Proportion, are display'd in the Structure of Man? But this is too vast a Depth for my Line, and the Limits of this present Discourse, and therefore shall not venture in, but in Justice to the Text, shall keep my self only to these three Manifestations of the Godhead in Nature, *viz.* Sensation in general, and the two Noblest Modifications of it, Hearing, and Seeing. All which are as Declarative of a God, as can be expected, supposing such a Being to be the Author of them.

And first, As to Sensation in general. Mr. *Lewenhoeck* found by his Microscope, that the Scarfskin was compos'd of an infinite Quantity of small Scales; so small, that a Grain of Sand would cover about Two hundred of them, and each of these Scales would cover Five hundred Ducts of the Miliary Glands, so that one Grain of Sand will cover One hundred thousand of these Orifices. Into each of these Glands, there goes an Artery Vein and Nerve; and then, Good God! What an Infinite Number of infinitely little Pipes are requir'd to be commensurate to the Surface of the whole Body, to make it perspire, and grow and feel in every Part, as it must do, for the Preservation of the Whole?

The

The Skin which covers the Instruments of Sensation, might have been as hard as our Nails, and then we had been insensible of abundance of Impressions, we now feel with Pleasure ; or it might have been as tender as our Eyes, and then we should have been perpetually *next like a Thing that is Raw*, we should have shriek'd at the Hand of our dearest Friend, and the Cloaths we now put on, with so much Complacency, would have been as unwelcome as the dressing of a Blister, and we liv'd in the Condition of a Man flea'd alive. But the Great Geometer, who does every Thing in Number, Weight and Measure, has most accurately proportion'd the feeling of his Creatures to the Bodies that act upon them.

When I consider these Things, methinks I am lost in the most delightful Confusion ; who can forbear crying out, O the Heighth and Depth of the Divine Architect ! *I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made, O Lord how manifold are thy Works ! In Wisdom hast thou made them all.* For what but Omnipotence could make a Creature of such manifold Complication ? What but Divine Dexterity could set to Rights, and range with that Niceness, this numberless Variety of Pipes invisible, and adjust this little World of Organs to the Great One without ? For the Constitution of the Inanimate World, must be intirely comprehended, to make the Animal. So that whoever shall rise from a just Consideration of the Humane Structure,

ture, will find plenty of Reasons to conclude, like *Jacob* after his Vision, *Surely the Lord is in this Place.* Thus much for Sensation in general ; proceed I next to the two fore-mention'd Modifications of it, Hearing and Seeing.

Without Hearing, we had been a World of Mutes, making Signs at One and Other ; the Jealousie and Confusion of such a World, we may guess at from the few unhappy Figures of this Kind we meet with in it. By Hearing, we provide against the Dangers we cannot see ; our Passions are pleasingly disarm'd by the Powers of Musick, our Cares silenc'd, and the whole Man restor'd by the numerous Variety of proportion'd Sounds. And if the Discourses of the Wise and Good, and the Conversation of Friends, have any Charm, 'tis all indebted to the Harmonious Composure of this Organ.

And as the Benefit is Great, so is the Contrivance Infinite ; for how is Humane Understanding quite swallow'd up, when it considers, that every Undulation possible, in this Fluid of Air, must be distinctly comprehended, to compose and set this Instrument of Hearing to it ? And what an incomprehensible Diversity of Waves are rais'd by an easy Motion of the Tongue only ? And all these Fluctuations in the Air, gather'd in by the External Ear, and deriv'd thro' many winding Channels to the Brain. I shall not enter upon the Particulars of this Structure, but observe only, that the Hole of the Ear is a crooked Tube, defended

fended by a glutinous Matter, from the Invasion
 of little Animals, which would be greatly imper-
 tinent and noisy in this Passage; and this and the
 other Meandrous Channels are form'd so crooked,
 with admirable Design, to break the Force of the
 Air, and proportion the Impulse to the Organs
 it strikes upon; whereas, were all the Ways di-
 rect and open, a Whisper would sound as shock-
 ing as the *Hgh Wind*; shatter the Machin, and
 strike us Deaf, as now we find too great and dis-
 proportion'd Sounds are apt to do, Notwithstand-
 ing these various Turnings and All-wise Provisions
 against it. Now *He that hath Ears to hear, let him*
hear; and tell me, what Faults he can find in this
 Fabrick for a God to mend, and to adjust it better
 than it is, to the Service of the Animal World;
 and shall not He then, who made the Ear, shall
 not he hear? Shall we deem it a Piece of Wisdom
 in our selves, to understand a little of this Organ,
 when made, and yet conclude there went no Wis-
 dom to the making of it? *H will fly to you*
 And lastly, For the Sense of Seeing. I need
 not mention the Use and Pleasure of this Sense,
 nor the sad Estate of such Persons, to whom Day
 and Night, are both alike; but as it is the most de-
 sirable, so does it seem the most wonderful of the
 Senses; and of which it may Emphatically be said,
This is the Lord's Doing, and it is *Marvellous in our*
Eyes. For what can strike a more pleasing Asto-
 nishment thro' the Soul of Man, than that the
 Particles

Particles of Matter, which compose this Body of Light, should be fram'd so infinitely Fine, that so many Millions of Particles of this subtil Fluid, continually streaming from every Point of luminous Objects upon the Pupilla, should be transmitted insensibly thro' the several Coats and Humours, and the Refractions all united on the Fund of the Eye, and there the Radiant Pencils describe the Situation, Figure, Magnitude, Motion, Distance and Colour of so many Bodies, with such Accuracy and Distinctness, and in a Room so prodigiously little. And a farther Manifestation yet of the Fruitfulness of the Divine Wisdom, is, That strange Variety of Eyes among the several Species of Creatures, and all adapted to the different Concerns of each Kind in the most advantageous manner, and with the most perfect Art imaginable. Now in an Organ so compounded of a Contexture so fine, and so curiously wrought, and so justly put together, and where the least Error in the Convexity of the CrySTALLIN Humour, or the Distance of the Retina, would occasion such Fatal Misrepresentations, and all these Errors in Vision so wisely avoided, and among the infinite Ways of mistaking, the only Right one pitch'd upon, and with that constant Exactness and Variety, according to the several Exigences of the different Kinds of Creatures; if these Things, I say, do not express a God, I cannot conceive how a God, supposing him to exist, can express himself by the Operation of his Hands.

These

These are some few Samples from the whole World of that *Eternal Power and Godhead* that made it ; Arguments properly *ad Homines*, such wherein *God has shew'd himself to you* in a more especial manner, to you who are brought up under these Natural Wonders, and intrinick with them ; and tho' Familiarity with some Things may justly breed Contempt, yet those of Nature will bear the Test for ever ; and every new Advancement rewards the Inquirer with new Incomes of Pleasure, and opens the most entertaining Scenes of Wisdom incomprehensible ; insomuch, that tho' Atheism in any Person is too monstrous to admit of Colouring, yet an *Atheistical Professor of Physick*, is to me, of all Men, left the most without Excuse. For the Hand of the Divine Artist comes out much more expressely in the Structure of Man, than it once did upon *Belshazzar's Wall*, and is intelligible at first Sight, without the Assistance of a Prophet, which makes me conclude this scurvy Imputation upon that *Venerable Body of Men*, to be as False, as it is Unreasonable. Now God being All in All, and seeing every Thing in himself before the Creation, and having copy'd out his Eternal Ideas in time, and cloath'd them with the Natures that make up the World, and having printed his Infinite Power, Wisdom and Goodness upon all his Creatures, the End of all this must be for the Glory of these Attributes ; but Rational Creatures only are capable of giving this Glory, and *Singing Praises with Understanding* ; and this we cannot do, without studying the Works we praise him

him for. This therefore is our Duty, our reasonable and delightful Service, the Usury God expects for his Talent of Wit, and that which we alone here below are qualify'd to pay; which brings me to the second General, viz.

II. *That the Works of God are to be study'd, in order to Glorify the Maker of them.*

Supposing the World to be a Chance-Cast only, and not the Issue of Almighty Wisdom, there might be some Reason to conclude a Philosopher, the most ridiculous Animal in Nature, for wearing out the Gloss of Life, and staring away his good Days among Quadrants and Telescopes, Furnaces, Air-Pumps, &c. and over-looking Riches and Honours, and all the soft and glittering Schemes of Living, for the lamentable Spoils of a disputable Victory of being but perhaps Master of a Thing or two in Nature, blindly jumbld together by a certain Power, I know not what, without any Wisdom or Contrivance belonging to it: But granting an All-wise Being to be the Builder of the World, the Reasons are very strong for the Study of it, both from Nature and Revelation. For by Nature we seem appointed for this Study, not only by a Faculty of Reason, but by the Satisfaction interwoven with the Study, which are Nature's Wages for the Work; and being plac'd in a World set every where thick with the Wonders of its Maker, and having an innate Curiosity urging on to Inquiry
and

and Experiment, we may strongly infer from these Indications, that we are design'd by the make of our Nature to study the Works of him that made us.

Besides, we feel in our selves an ardent Desire of Praise and Glory; the Passion burns continually, and has the same Action upon the Moral World, as the Sun upon the Natural; it gives Life and Birth to the Noblest Designs, and supports them incredibly, and is stronger than Death. Now the Praises we so passionately expect our selves, for Praise-worthy Actions, we feel we cannot in Justice deny to others, upon as good or better Grounds. God therefore who acts for his own Glory, and who alone is worthy to be Praised, and who breath'd this Fire into our Constitution, and with all this Notion of Justice, must intend this Provision for his own Honour, to make himself the Sum and Center of all Praise and Glory. In this Case, we may well argue from a Disposition to a Habit, from a Power of Praising, to an Obligation of the Act, especially when we have God's express Word so often for it. The Psalmist concludes with a Command to *every Thing that hath Breath to Praise the Lord*; and the same Psalmist directs these Praises to be sung with Understanding, Ps. 47. v. 7. and yet he summons in the Inanimate World to Celebrate their Maker, Ps. 148. *Praise him Sun and Moon, Praise him O ye Stars and Light, Mountains and all Hills, Fruitful Trees and all Cedars.* But these are mute Persons in this great Drama, and speak by their Mouths only, who think it their Duty to be-

flow some Reflections upon the Wisdom of their
 Maker ; for he who comprehends nothing of the
 Beauty and Design in these Things, is not much
 fitter to praise the Maker of 'em, than the Things
 themselves ; and therefore 'tis we who are call'd up-
 on by the Psalmist, to study the Power, the Wis-
 dom and Goodness of God in the Creation of these
 Things, and from thence to make 'em the To-
 picks of a Reasonable Praise and Thanksgiving.
 He who contemplates the Sun seated in the Center,
 and like our indulgent Ruler on the Throne, shin-
 ing upon all with proportion'd Blessings, and confi-
 ders that unaccountable Power of Attraction so ad-
 justed to his Bulk, as to keep the several Planets
 and their Attendants in a regular Obedience and
 Motion about him, and that after burning some
 thousands of Years, after such Extent of Time, and
 Intenseness of Heat, he continues as much a Giant,
 as Warm and Bolifick, as the first Day he began
 his Course, and withall examines the Incomprehen-
 sible Subtilty and Swiftneſs of his Light, that it is
 resistable, and therefore a Body, and yet a Body so
 infinitely Fine, that the largest Torrent of Rays is
 reducible to a Point, and that his Light, or *the*
Wings of the Morning, as the Psalmist calls it, fly
 down to us in about ten Minutes, which a Cannon
 Bullet would be twenty five Years a going, with
 the same Velocity it is at first discharg'd with, and
 likewise reflects upon the Usefulness of this swift
 and subtle Fluid, for Vision, Heat, Motion, &c.
 He who observes the Bulk and Situation of the
 Moon,

Moon, that was the bigger or nearer, or less or farther off, our Tides would rise above our Houses, or subside into a stinking Puddle; He also, who is so much a Philosopher, as to see that Mountains and Hills, *are not the ghastly Fragments of the Deluge, the unseemly and barren Lumps of a ruinous World,* but that they breed our Minerals, and treasure up our Waters, and occasion all our Rivers, for the Support of the Vegetative and Animal World. And lastly, He that studiously looks over the Variety of *fruitful Trees and Cedars,* Trees for Food and Fuel, for Pleasure and Medicine, for Building and Shipping, &c. He who has consider'd these and a thousand other Admirables belonging to 'em; This, this is the Man, who glorifies his Maker, by *Singing his Praises with Understanding,* who burns with Light as well as Passion, when he cries out with David, — *Praise him Sun and Moon, Praise him O ye Stars and Light, — Mountains and all Hills, Fruitful Trees and all Cedars.*

However some Men may Canonize Ignorance, for the Mother of Devotion, for Reasons in the Pocket, and not in the Nature of the Thing; yet the Admiration of the Ignorant, is but like the Blind Man's Commendation of a Beauty; it is such insipid Incense, that a wise Person delights not in the Offering. Praise from a Judge of Praise-worthy Actions, is indeed *Spirit of Life,* and more Precious than all the fulsom Ointment of Popular Commendation. Pretenders and Quacks may feed upon such gross Breath; but the *Sons of Art love their*

their Medicines should be view'd, their Practice examin'd, and their Names perfum'd by the Understanding Few; and therefore we may conclude from our selves, that meer Lip-Service, or a bare Confession, that God is infinitely Powerful, Wise and Good, is not the acceptable Sacrifice, but to illustrate these Perfections from the Works of Nature, and upon Principles to demonstrate, how the Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament sheweth his Handy-work.

It is with God's Works, as with his Word. He who studies the Holy Scriptures, will be most sensible of the Beautiful Oeconomy of our Redemption; and he who studies the World, will form the worthiest Ideas of God, in his Works of Creation and Providence; and consequently this must be the most grateful and becoming way of Glorifying the Maker and Preserver of all Things, that a Brutish Incuriosity, or a stupid Neglect of the Study of Nature, where proper Means are afforded for it, is highly displeasing to God, we may guess at a little from what we feel in our selves; for when we have brought forth any Work of Wisdom, or with much Pain and Travel finish'd only a beautiful Hypothesis, do not we find a chilling Displeasure run thro' our Veins at the total Neglect of it? And is not the Great Man angry at the taking no Notice of his fine House and Gardens? And therefore we may well conclude, that Almighty God, who made Man after his own Image, and put him into a World ready furnish'd, with all the Necessaries

and

and Pleasurables of Life, and gave him the Dominion of all his Creatures, we may well conclude, I say, that this infinitely Wise and Beneficent Being, must needs take it extremely ill at the Hands of his own Image, a Creature he has done so much for, to see him pass away his Time like the great Leviathan, with the same Incogitancy of the Beasts that perish, *with the Harp and the Viol, the Tabret and the Pipe in his Feasts, and not regarding the Work of the Lord, nor considering the Operation of his Hands.*

The Sum of what I have been advancing upon this Head, concerning our Obligation to the Study of Nature, in short is this, That this World being a glorious Expression of the Divine Power, Wisdom and Goodness, and these Attributes not possible to be given, but by Rational Creatures only, and by those neither without some Knowledge in the Excellency of the Workmanship, nor this Knowledge to be had without a studious Inquiry into the Contrivance and Structure of Things, The Inference of the second Proposition is just and strong, *That the Works of Nature are to be study'd, in order to Glorify the Maker of 'em*; not that Men are oblig'd to be all Philosophers, in spite of Nature and Fortune, but in Proportion to their Talents, and the Station they are plac'd in by Providence; and since your Calling necessarily leads you into the several Kingdoms of Nature, let me presume to remind you thus far only, That while you make the Wisdom of God your Object, and his Glory and the Good of Mankind your End, you Consecrate

crate your Profession, and will bring down Blessings upon your selves, and your Society, and become truly Christian Virtuosi. And next to the Study of the Scriptures, that of Nature is the most ravishing Employment on this side Heaven; and were but the Children of Plenty, before their Minds are dissipated by Pleasure, their Judgments discolour'd by false Ideas of Gallantry, and their Passions strengthen'd by Indulgence; were they but brought up, I say, to a Patience of Thinking, and sufficiently submitted to the Severities of Geometry, and upon this Stock furnish'd with Expenses for Experiment, for diving into the Structure of Things, and examining Nature by Principles Methematical; was our Nobles and Gentry but inur'd to this Real and Substantial Philosophy, we should hear of fewer Atheists, less of solitary and empty Greatness, less of Pride and Luxury, and the sad Consequences of united Riches and Ignorance; and we should find more Humility and Devotion, more useful Wisdom, more free and undesigned Commerce and a better habitable World in all Respects, which brings me to the last Thing propos'd, viz.

III. *That a Studious Sober Inquiry into the Works of Nature, is very Instrumental to Religion.*

And it is Instrumental in these two Respects; in supporting the Notion of a God, and in promoting the practical Duties of Religion. For the first, I may

may venture to say, that Real Philosophy, and Speculative Atheism, can dwell together, no more than Light and Darkness. The Fool indeed, who sets up for Atheism, sets up in a Philosopher's Cloak, under a Pretext and Colour of Reason, but 'tis meer Cloak and Appearance; for you may observe, the Youth begins to say *there is no God*, about one and twenty Years of Age, a Time when Reason is weak, his Guardians dismiss'd, his Passions pushing in their full Strength, and the Estate within Reach of his Appetites; and having faithfully serv'd his Lords for some Years, and having his Master, his *Ears* are *bor'd*; and he becomes a willing Slave for ever. And now he is sewing Fig-leaves together to cover his Shame, and taking up with anything that makes for his Party, and sides with his Passion, and overlooking the rest, and thus what was begun in Weakness, and continu'd in Heat, is at length justify'd by Argument; for every Man is willing to find some Reason or other for being a Fool. But they now, who go down to the Springs of Nature, *These Men see the Works of the Lord, and his Wonders in the Deep*. They see such Inconsistencies with Mechanism, such a frugal Simplicity in the Causes, and such amazing Variety and Fineness in the Effects, that they cannot study the Characters, but they must acknowledge the Hand.

Could we imagine the Accident, that a Company of Botanists in the way of Simpling, should light upon a Watch, in looking for a Plant, and withal perfect Strangers to the Nature of Clock-work, we

might expect such kind of Reasonings would arise about this little Machine, as about the Great one of the World. One perhaps would gaze his Eyes upon the Beauty of the Case only, without the trouble of Reflection: Another would open the Curiosity, and consult its Entrails, but little attending to the Design; and seeing a seeming Contrariety in the Motion of the Wheels, would argue it to be a Work of Chance, indented and wrought by the Teeth of Time. A Third would roundly conclude the Trinket from all Eternity; but a Fourth more Philosophical than the rest, poring out the Design by the Indication of the Hand, and observing the curious Adjustment of all the Springs and Movements for the Regulation of Time, and withal its Dependence upon an extrinick Power, to wind it up and preserve it in Motion. Observing these Things, I say, he would exclude Chance and Eternity from the Work, and sit down under the Pleasure of Demonstration, that the Engine was contriv'd and put together in Time, by a wise Agent, and stands in need of Providence, and a helping Hand from without to keep it in Order. Thus it is in the Works of God; the Naturalist discovers by his Glasses an inimitable Fineness and Embroidery in the Contexture of every Plant, and the Vegetative Motion more prodigiously unaccountable and nice, than that of a Watch. He finds likewise a perpetual Motion in every Animal, and withal, Reasons to conclude the Organs not only actually Infinite, but also a Necessity of being form'd

all at once, to make an Animal, as in a Watch they need not. He sees a constant Uniformity in all the Operations of Nature, infinitely more conclusive against Chance, than a Man's throwing the same Variety of Numbers upon ten thousand Dice, ten thousand times together; and whither tend these Noble Discoveries in Nature, but to secure the Notion of a God upon Grounds incontestable? For tho' a little Philosophy may make an Atheist, a great deal must overturn him. An Instance of this you have in your Father *Galen*, who seem'd for a time in Suspence about the Being of a God, till Anatomy let him into the Animal World, and open'd the Cabinet and Secrets of Nature, and then the Rarities of the Structure gave a Shine, that pierc'd him like Lightning irresistible; the Divine Wisdom presented it self in a manner so affecting, that he fell down before the Evidence, and sang Praises to the God who so wonderfully made him. Thus the Study of Nature serves Religion, by supporting the Notion of a God, which is the Foundation of it; for the Atheist has nothing to cover himself, but the Cloak of Philosophy; and when we pull off this, and engage him upon his own Principles, and prove the Production of every Creature above the Powers of Mechanism, we turn his Artillery upon himself, and cut off the Monster's Head with his own Sword; and it not only supports the Notion of a God, but also in the last Place, promotes the great Duties of Practical Religion.

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The Study of Nature is apt to kindle and keep alive a constant Sense of God upon the Mind; For the Invisible Things of God, says the Apostle, are clearly seen by the Things that are made; and this awful Vision, or Presence of God upon his Creatures, naturally tends to fill the Soul with agreeable Resentments, to strike the Philosopher upon his Knees, into all the pious Disorders of Holy Wonder and Adoration, and to make his Mind shine with Study, as it were like the Face of Moses, when he came directly from God himself. While we see the Almighty Power and Goodness in the Make and Conservation of all Things, as a Philosopher cannot help seeing, we are instructed by the Sight, to use the Creature as God's and not our own; to look upon our selves, not as Proprietors, but Stewards, to think upon the Sick and Needy, and to provide for their Wants out of that Abundance, which God has deposited in our Hands for the Purposes of Charity, and to use the rest with Thanks and Moderation. When the grateful Psalmist would quicken his Spirit, and wind himself up to a Heavenly Pitch, he does it by Fomenting his Mind with the Consideration of the Particulars of the Creation, in whole Psalms together, Ps. 148, 149. And here I cannot but take notice, as well for the Honour of the Man, as the Example to his Brethren, how the Excellent Bellini, when defix'd in the Contemplations of the Animal Fabrick, breaks out at every turn in a kind of Divine Fury, and particularly musing upon the motion of the
Heart,

Heart, and the Principles of Generation, the Fire kindles, and at last he speaks with his Tongue, and in the most pathetic Exclamation concludes the Chapter to God in these Words. *Ab Deum Immortalem! Video præsens numen tuum in hisce tam prodigiosis Generationis initiis, & in altissima eorum Contemplatione defixus, nescio quo æstro Admirationis concitor, & quasi mei impos, & quasi divine furens, cobibere me minime possum, quin exclamem, — Magnus Dominus! Magnus Fabricator hominum Deus! Magnus atque Admirabilis! Conditor rerum Deus, quam magnus es!* Bellin. de mot. cord. propos. 24. The Application I would leave upon the Minds of his Brethren, is, that in their Contemplations of Nature, They would go and do likewise.

Besides, an intimate Commerce with God's Works, is apt to give a Largeness and Nobility of Soul, by lifting the Philosopher above low and selfish Designs, which most usually people narrow and unphilosophick Spirits, by inspiring generous Inventions for the Service of God and the Publick; and what a late honourable Philosopher has done for both, by his Experiments and Posthumous Charity, perfumes his Memory at present; and I believe the Sweetness will last, and his Philosophy be bless'd from Generation to Generation.

To conclude, the Naturalist is always meeting with Difficulties and humbling Phenomena in the Disquisitions of Nature; and these Humiliations are good to dismount Pride and Confidence in Matters of Religion; this Sense of his Intellectual Weak-

Weakness is a *Specifick* against that Scurvy Itch of Disputing, that is so apt to breed ill Blood among the Disputants, and to fill the Mind with little else but Wind and Notion. This Diffidence and Modesty in Judgment, the Philosopher finds so much Reason for, makes him proceed with Caution, makes him consider much, and hear patiently; state fairly, and distinguish nicely; reason without Wrangling, shine without Flaming, and differ without Dividing: In a Word, makes him prefer Peace and Friendship, Obedience and Charity, above naked Orthodoxy. These I take to be the genuine Fruits of a sober Inquiry into the Works of God; and if so, I think they sufficiently prove *the Study of Nature to be serviceable to Religion*, which was the last Thing to be prov'd.

I have been too long upon the Subject, to detain you much longer in the Application, and shall therefore but just remind you, that the Heathen World had the Law written upon the Heart, and the Manifestations of God in his Creatures; this was the Rule, and the only Rule they had to Live by, and for not doing it, were concluded without Excuse. But we (Blessed be God for ever for it) have had his Son our Saviour Jesus Christ come down from Heaven in our own Flesh, to instruct us by Precept and Example, who spake as never Man spake, and liv'd as never Man liv'd, who has deliver'd us from the Conjectures of Philosophy, from the long and anxious Deductions of Reason,

(25)
Reason, both in point of Duty and Reward; for his Rising from the Dead, is an Argument so sensible, so clear and convictive to the meanest Apprehensions, that there is not the least Room left for the Pain of Opinion about another Life. He has likewise given us Apostles and Martyrs, and a Cloud of Witnesses to go before us, and a standing Order of Men to inculcate these Things continually upon our Minds, and his Grace to conduct and comfort us in our way to Heaven. *Take heed, therefore my Brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil Heart of Unbelief, in departing from the living God.* Remember it will be more tollerable for Tyre and Sidon, Sodom and Gomorrah, in the Day of Judgment, for those who never heard of Christ, than for those who have heard of him, but not to the Purposes of good Living, who after all this Light have sate in Darkness, and neglected so great Salvation; you must be sure then to give the Holy Scriptures the first Place in your Study and Affection; and if you fix one End of the Compass upon the Bible, you may turn about the other at Pleasure, with Curiosity and Freedom becoming a Philosopher, always keeping your Eye upon the Creator, while you converse with his Creatures, and not like the ungrateful Shepherds, forgetting the Fountain, when you are drinking the Streams; and thus while you make God's Works, as well as his Word, contribute to his Glory and your own Edification, you shine in your Sphere, and adorn your Profession, and become the Friends both of
God

God and Man. And may it please Almighty God
to bless your Studies for the Increase of Health
for your own Satisfaction, and for the Pleasure and
Benefit of Mankind, and *that by the wholesome Medi-*
cines of his Doctrine, all the Diseases of our Souls
may be heal'd, thro' the Merits of his Son: Jesus Christ
our Lord. Amen.

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